

## City of Columbus EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant Fact Sheet

In October 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) awarded the City of Columbus a Brownfields Assessment Cooperative Agreement (CA) for the environmental assessment of brownfield properties which may be contaminated with hazardous substances. The CA includes \$400,000 in grant funds for the assessment of sites within the City. These funds will be used to inventory and investigate the historic uses of brownfield properties; determine the presence, type, severity, and extent of contamination; and develop remedial alternatives that will allow for safe and viable reuse of the properties. The CA will also allow the City to develop cleanup plans, conduct health monitoring, and provide public outreach to offer an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input and encourage the identification, remediation, and redevelopment of contaminated properties. This effort will be directed by City of Columbus staff and will be conducted through September 2018.

EPA's Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields.

1. **What is a Brownfield?** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant". It is estimated that there are more than 450,000 brownfields in the U.S.
2. **What are examples of Brownfields in our community?** Brownfields are often abandoned, closed, or under-used industrial or commercial properties. They can also be former schools, hospitals, multi-family residential properties, former gas stations, dry cleaners, warehouses, commercial properties, car dealerships, etc. Residential properties are generally not considered brownfields.
3. **Why is Columbus addressing Brownfields?** Brownfields sites can create undesirable environments for the properties around them. They are frequently vacant or underutilized, and could be contributing to depressed property values in the area. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties increases local tax bases, facilitates job growth, efficiently utilizes existing infrastructure, alleviates development pressure on productive farm land, and improves and protects the environment.
4. **What is a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment?** Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA's) are conducted to learn about past and present activities on a property. Specifically they identify potential or existing environmental contamination on a property; however, the sampling of soil, water, and air, is not conducted as a part of a Phase I ESA. A Phase I ESA also provides protection for potential purchasers of property from liabilities associated with past property use and potential environmental damages.
5. **What is a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment?** If a Phase I ESA indicates the presence of recognized environmental concerns on a property, then a Phase II ESA may be conducted to determine if contamination is present, and if so, where it is located and how much exists. Soil, water, and air are sampled and analyzed for the presence of regulated chemicals. Additionally, geotechnical surveys may be conducted to search for the presence of underground storage tanks and other sources of potential contamination. Once contamination is identified, it can be delineated to find its limits which will help in developing a plan to remediate the property.

For further information on the City of Columbus Brownfield program, please contact Mary Ferdon, Executive Director of Administration & Community Development for the City of Columbus at 812-376-2527, or [mferdon@columbus.in.gov](mailto:mferdon@columbus.in.gov).